X-MEN

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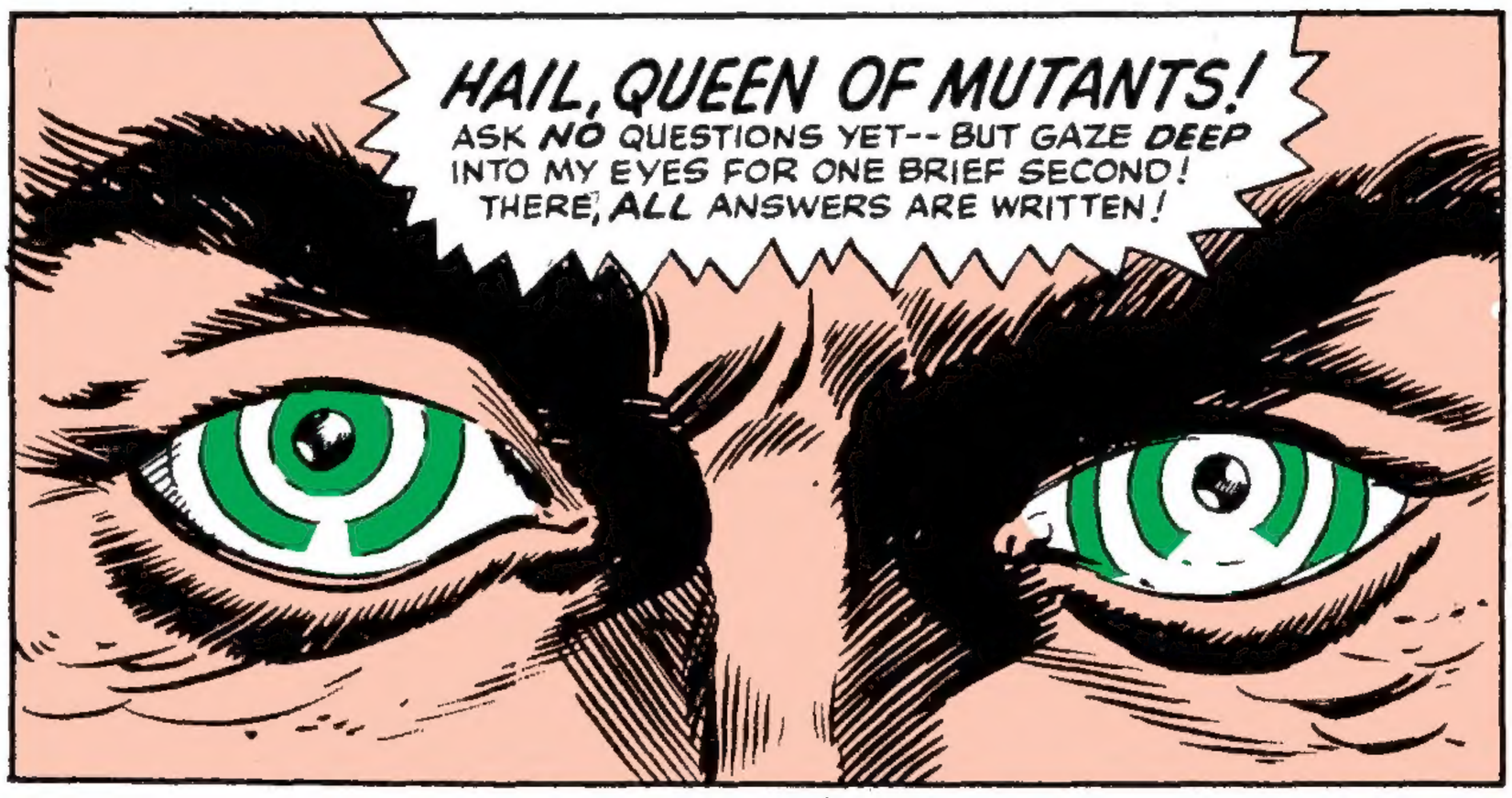
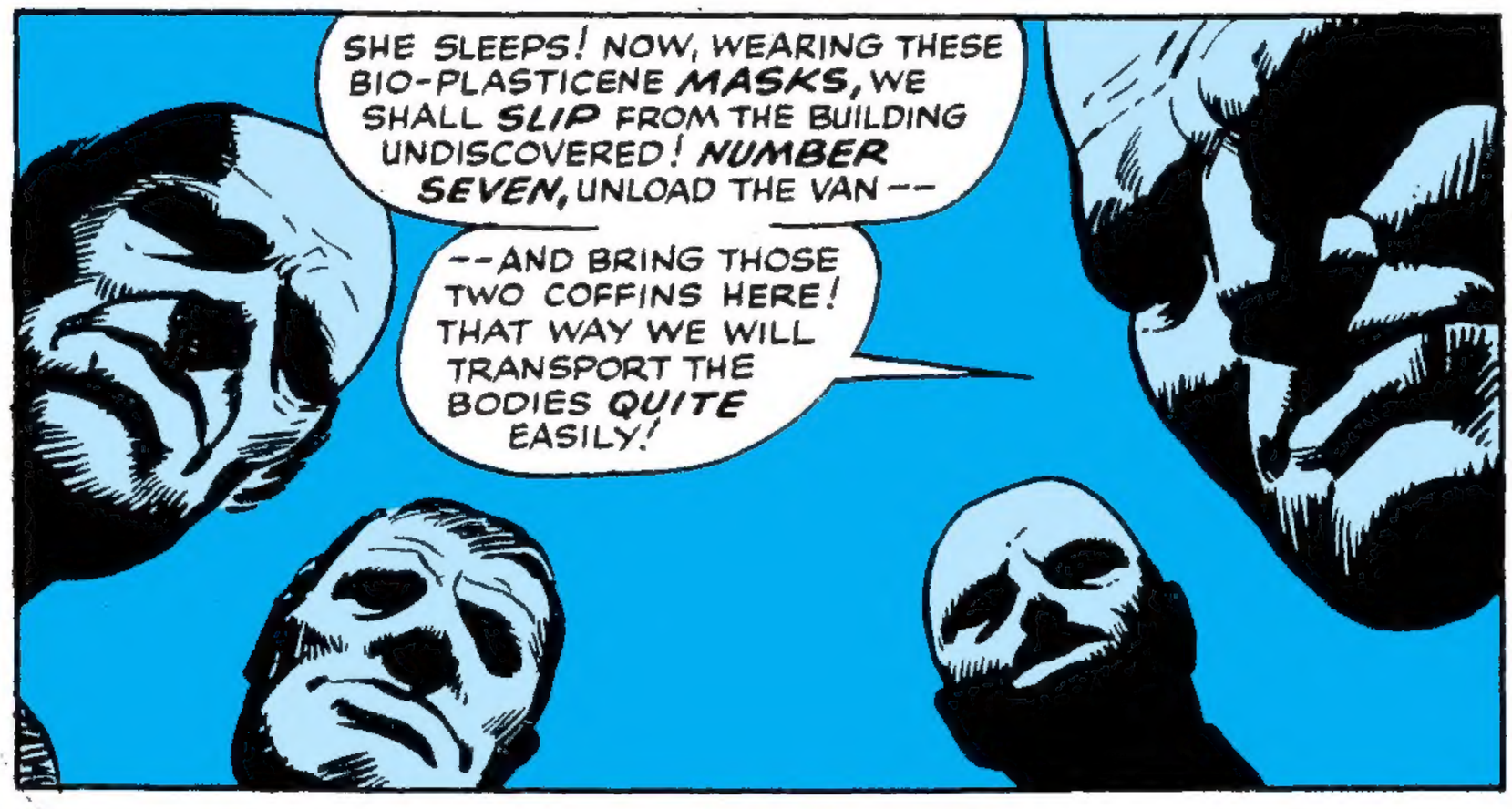
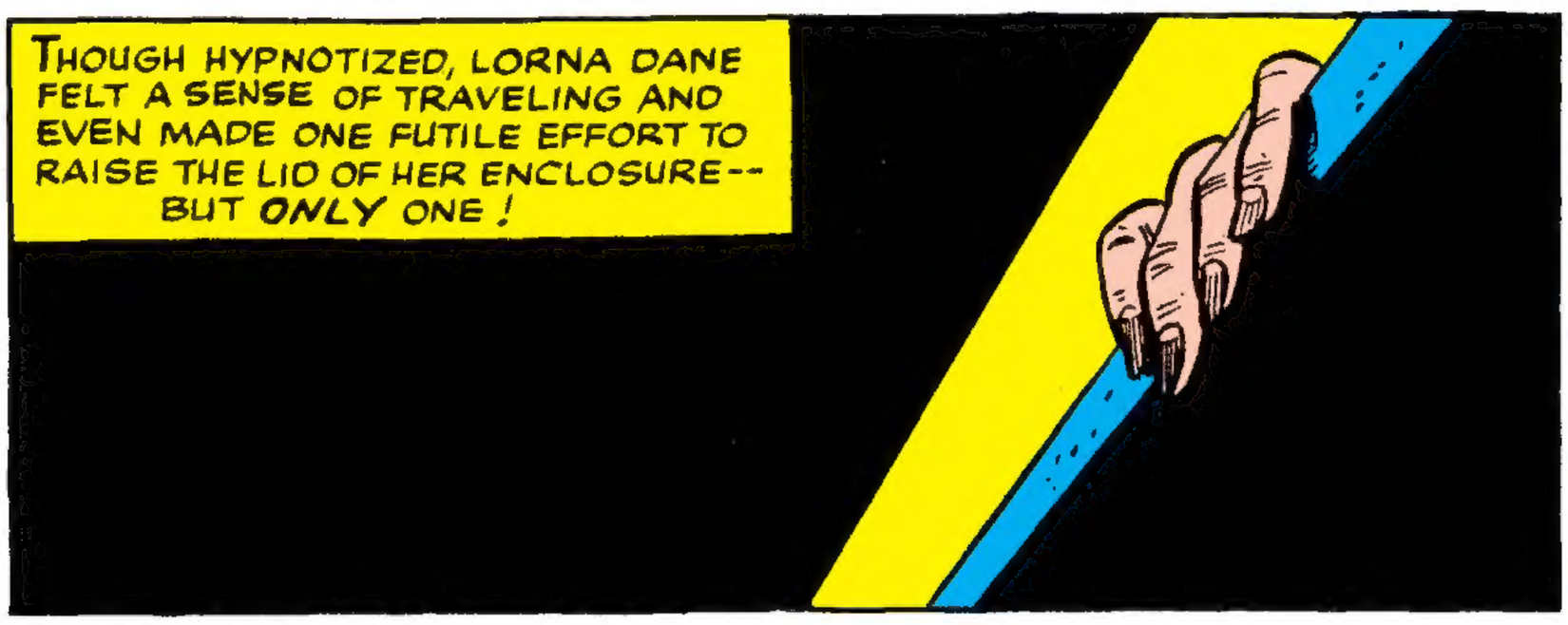



SHE SLEEPS! NOW, WEARING THESE BIO-PLASTICENE MASKS, WE SHALL SLIP FROM THE BUILDING UNDISCOVERED! NUMBER SEVEN, UNLOAD THE VAN --
--AND BRING THOSE TWO COFFINS HERE! THAT WAY WE WILL TRANSPORT THE BODIES QUITE EASILY!


THOUGH HYPNOTIZED, LORNA DANE FELT A SENSE OF TRAVELING AND EVEN MADE ONE FUTILE EFFORT TO RAISE THE LID OF HER ENCLOSURE-- BUT ONLY ONE!

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THE X-MEN

ARE TOGETHER AGAIN--AND THAT'S ALL THE GOOD NEWS! FOR THEY FACE AN ENEMY THAT STAGGERS THE IMAGINATION--AND THREATENS SANITY ITSELF! FROM A NEST, OF PUREST, BASEST EVIL, STRANGE PSYCHO-KINETIC COMMANDS FLY-- CLARIONS CALL TO THE UNCONSCIOUS MUTANTS OF THE WORLD! AND...LIKE SOME STRANGE ARMY OF THE HALF-LIVING...THEY MARCH!

THEIR PERVERSE PIED-PIPER IS--MESMERO! FOR IT IS HE WHO GUARDS THE VILE HERITAGE OF MAGNETO-- MASTER OF EVIL MUTANTS! WHILE THE OTHER X-MEN SEARCH OUT MESMERO, ICEMAN REMAINS BEHIND TO PROTECT LORNA DANE, HERSELF A TARGET OF THE GREAT MUTANT CONSPIRACY!

SUDDENLY, MESMERO AND HIS ELITE GUARD BURST UPON THE SCENE, OVERWHELMING ICEMAN'S HEROIC DEFENSES AND PARALYZING HIS BODY! LORNA LISTENS IN FEAR AS MESMERO SPEAKS HIS STRANGELY SICKENING SALUTE

--HAIL, QUEEN OF MUTANTS!

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CITY OF MUTANTS

HAIL, MESMERO!

FROM THE FLOOR OF THE *DESERT* ITSELF THE STRANGE MAGICALLY RISES--FORTRESS OF FIENDISHNESS AND MEMORIAL TO MALEVOLENCE! WHAT UNSPEAKABLE ACTS AWAIT COMMITTING IN THIS SELF-CONTAINED EARTHLY HELL?!

HAIL, MESMERO--KEEPER OF THE FLAME OF MAGNETO, EMPEROR OF EVIL MUTANTS!

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AN AUTOMATIC RAMP WHIRS INTO POSITION, AND THE MISSILE-POWERED CAR *RUSHES* TO MEET IT!

MESMERO IS QUICK TO *DISCARD* THE CURSED DISGUISE AND DON HIS *ROBE AND HELMET* OF OFFICE!

THEN SHALL WE KNOW ONCE *AGAIN* THE IN-SPIRATION THAT WILL MAKE US *RULERS* OF ALL--

--*MASTERS OF MEN!*

ICEMAN MUST BE PLACED IN *CELL TWELVE!* BUT THE GIRL--

--SHALL BE PREPARED FOR THE *MUTANT ENERGY STIMULATOR!* THE *MES* WILL STIR TO LIFE HER EVERY LATENT *POWER!*

CRZZZN!

CRACKLE!

AND THEN, THE *LONGEST* THREE SECONDS ENDURABLE--AS HIGH ENERGY STIMULATORS PULSATINGLY *PROBE* THE GENETIC CORE OF EACH BODY CELL, STIRRING THE AWESOME LATENT POWER WITHIN THE *INNOCENT* BEING OF LORNA DANE...

MEANWHILE, AS THE X-MEN APPROACH MESMERO'S CITY HIDEOUT...

WHAT GROSS EVIL LURKS BEHIND THAT GRIM GOTHIC FACADE?

IT GIVES ME THE SCREAMING MEEMIES JUST TO LOOK AT IT!

THAT'S ONE COOKIE JAR I'M GONNA LIKE BUSTIN' INTO!

CAREFULLY! A WILY MIND HIDES WITHIN THOSE MURKY HALLS!

ALL RIGHT, X-MEN-- ATTACK!!

THERE ARE BEINGS IN THERE THAT FEAST ON THE HUMAN SOUL ITSELF! SO SHOW THEM NO MERCY!

DISPLAYING TEAR-FILLED TOLERANCE WAS NOT PRECISELY WHAT I HAD IN MIND, SCOTT, LAD!

CHUMS--I THINK THAT THE MUTANT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SENT THIS *RECEPTION* COMMITTEE!

KWOOOSH!

NO JESTING!

LESS JEST-- MORE JOUST!

BAWOOOOOF!

I HEAR YOU *TALKING*, O NOBLE AND MUNIFICENT *MASTER OF THE OPTIC ARTS!*

I *JUST* ENROLLED YOU IN THE PRESIDENT'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST *CIVIL VIOLENCE!*

I MAY NOT BE AS *SHOWY* AS YOU GENTS, BUT I *DO* MAKE MY POINT--

--TRUSSING UP A MAN WITH HIS *OWN* ROBES!

MMMMF!

OKAY, BEAST--HERE COMES A BILLIARD SHOT! EIGHT BALL IN THE SIDE POCKET!

WOOSH!

BAWJMP!

RIGHT OFF THE CUSHION AND--BULL'S-EYE!

KWAM!

IT'S ALMOST A PLEASURE, DUSTING THIS DEMON SKULL WITH A PACK OF KNUCKLES!

THEN SEE IF MY CARESS BRINGS PLEASURE, AS WELL!

ARRGH!

BAWAP!

TELEPATHIC DISTRESS CALL FROM BOBBY! MESMERO HOLDING HIM AND LORNA CAPTIVE! LOCATION NOT CLEAR!

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND THEM--LET OURSELVES BE CAPTURED, TOO! MUST GET MENTAL MESSAGE TO THE BOYS!

BWOM!

OOOOF!

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JEAN WANTS US TO *THROW* THE FIGHT! SOMETHING TO DO WITH *SAVING* BOBBY!

IT'S *EASY* ENOUGH TO LOSE! BUT THE FINESSE LIES--

--IN LOSING WITHOUT *LOOKING* BAD! OTHERWISE THE VERY *ACT* BECOMES SUSPECT!

CRACKLE!

=*AAARRHH!*= ELECTRIC *BOLOS!* IF THEY'VE GOT MORE GIMMICKS LIKE THESE, LOSIN' WILL BE A *CINCH!* STAYIN' *ALIVE* MIGHT BE TOUGH!

SUDDENLY, AS THE X-MEN CARRY ON THEIR COUNTERFEIT COMBAT, BACK TO BACK, A GIANT *PLASTIC BAG* DROPS ABOUT THEM, AND...

G--G--GAS! SOME KIND OF KNOCKOUT VAPOR! =*COUGH!*= F--F-- FAST-ACTING STUFF!

SEVEN *SECONDS*, TO BE PRECISE! IT IS CALLED, *K-19!* PERFECTED BY *MAGNETO* HIMSELF!

IN THREE MORE SECONDS IT WILL ENTER YOUR *BLOOD STREAMS* --AND THEN--

HSSSSSSS!

SWIFTLY, THE SILENT WEAPON TAKES ITS TOLL AND THE X-MEN SINK INTO *SWIRLING* OBLIVION--!

IT IS *DONE!* OUR MORTAL ENEMIES-- THEMSELVES MUTANTS --HAVE BECOME *TOOTHLESS* TIGERS! NOW--

--WE SHALL RETURN WITH THIS TRIUMPHANT *TRIBUTE* TO THE GREAT MESMERO! ON TO-- *MUTANT CITY!*

SHORTLY, BENEATH THE VAST, UNTRAVELED DESERT WASTES...

WERE YOU EVEN *ABLE* TO OVERCOME THE HYPNOTIC PARALYSIS, STRUGGLE WOULD BE *USELESS,* ICEMAN! FOR THAT DEVICE THAT HOLDS YOU--

--IS PROGRAMMED TO *DESTRUCT*--THE MOMENT YOU THREATEN TO *FREE* YOURSELF! NOW GAZE UPON THE VIDEO MONITOR--

--AND *SEE* HOW THE MERE MORTAL CALLED LORNA DANE IS TRANSMUTED INTO A *LIVING GODDESS!*

THE *QUESTION* IS-- WHEN THAT SUPER-GADGET REALIZES HER MUTANT POTENTIAL, WILL IT ALSO *ALTER HER PERSONALITY?* WILL SHE BECOME-- AS *EVIL* AS THEY?

THE *GENIUS* THAT WAS BEQUEATHED US BY THE MAGNIFICENT *MAGNETO* SHALL BRING FORTH FROM THIS FEEBLE SHELL-- A BEING POWERFUL BEYOND *ALL* OTHERS! AND OUR *INVINCIBLE* LEADER!

HAIL, MESMERO! WE COME IN TOTAL TRIUMPH! THE REMAINING X-MEN HAVE *FALLEN* TO US!

HOW SHALL THEY BE *DISPOSED* OF?

I HAVE A MOST GRATIFYING *END* PLANNED FOR THEM ALL! BUT IT MUST WAIT! MEANWHILE, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT *ANY* RESISTANCE ON THEIR PART--SHALL BRING *INSTANT DEATH* TO THE ONE.CALLED *ICEMAN!*

ALL EYES NOW FOCUS UPON THE GIANT ELECTRONIC TRANSMUTER AS ITS WHINING, CRACKLING CHORALE BUILDS TO A *DEAFENING* CRESCENDO, AND FINALLY--

--UTTER *SILENCE!* THEN, WITH A STRANGELY REGAL STEP AND DARKLY MENACING MIEN, THE INVOLUNTARY SUBJECT OF THAT *GENETIC STIMULATOR* MOVES FORTH!

BEHOLD! SHE STANDS BEFORE US NOW--THE OMNIPOTENT EMPRESS OF ALL EVIL MUTANTS! FOR WITHIN HER RUNS THE BLOOD OF HE WHOSE NAME IS SACRED UNTO US! YES--NOW MAY I REVEAL THAT SHE IS--

--DAUGHTER OF MAGNETO--AND QUEEN OF MUTANTS! HAIL, GLORIOUS QUEEN!

NOW I UNDERSTAND THE STRANGE STIRRINGS WITHIN ME THAT TORTURED MY SOUL ALMOST FROM MY FIRST CONSCIOUS MOMENT! FOR, MY FATHER'S BLOOD, THOUGH UNKNOWN TO ME, COULD NOT BE SILENCED!

YES--I KNOW MY CALLING NOW! I AM YOUR--QUEEN!

BOW YOUR HEADS, USELESS ONES, BEFORE THE GREATNESS THAT IS HERS!

FANTASTIC! THIS WAS THE SECRET WEAPON THEY SPOKE OF--M-2! MAGNETO-THE-SECOND! WE THOUGHT ONLY OF A POSSIBLE SON--

IT NEVER DAWNED ON US IT MIGHT BE A DAUGHTER! IF SHE HAS ONLY HALF OF HER FATHER'S POWER--

--WE'VE STEPPED INTO A NASTY TRAP!

ENOUGH OF THIS HESITATION WALTZ, GOOD COMRADES! LET US PROVIDE MESMERO WITH A LESSON IN THE VIOLENT ARTS!

IF YOU MEAN LIKE--POW!--

--THEN LEMME BE THE FIRST TO SAY-- I'M WITH YOU!

HOLD IT, YOU TWO! ICEMAN IS THEIR HYPNOTIC PRISONER, REMEMBER? ANY MOVE BY US COULD MEAN HIS DEATH!

THEN WHY DON'T I BREAK MESMERO'S HOLD ON HIM? LIKE--THIS!!

WHAT'S THAT? TINGLING SENSATION IN MY LIMBS! THE HYPNOTIC BOND IS LOOSENING! NOW IF I--

--CAN JUST GET UP ENOUGH FREEZE POWER TO BUST OUT OF HERE!

CRASH!

DID IT! TEMPERATURE EXTREMES SHATTERED THAT PRISON GLOBE! NOW HOW ABOUT LETTING ME BACK IN THE BALLGAME, COACH?

I SENSE THAT ICEMAN HAS BROKEN FREE! TIME TO END THIS TASTELESS COMEDY!

ATTENTION, X-MEN! YOUR FINAL MOMENT IS AT HAND!

YOU, WHO BROUGHT DEATH TO THE GENIUS THAT WAS MAGNETO, SHALL APPROPRIATELY MEET YOUR END AT THE HANDS OF HIS OWN CHILD!

DAUGHTER OF THE *EMPEROR OF EVIL*-- OFFSPRING OF OUR BELOVED LEADER--NOW *TURN* YOUR INSUPERABLE POWER--

-- TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THOSE WHO *TOOK* YOUR FATHER FROM US!

AT THAT *VERY* SECOND, ICEMAN ARRIVES ON THE RUN...

NO! DON'T DO IT, LORNA! CAN'T YOU SEE--THEY'VE TWISTED YOU--TURNED YOU AGAINST ALL THAT'S GOOD! *STOP!!*

FROM EVERY LIVING CELL OF THAT MUTANT BEING FLOW MIGHTY *WAVES* OF INCREDIBLE FORCE--

--SLAMMING OUTWARD TO FLING THEIR HUMAN TARGETS INTO A LABYRINTHINE *LIMBO!* YET--

--IT IS *NOT* AGAINST THE X-MEN THAT SHE HAS UNLOOSED THAT FANTASTIC FORCE, BUT AGAINST THE VERY WORSHIPPERS OF *MAGNETO*--!

GREAT GOING, GAL! YOU WERE WITH US ALL ALONG--WAITING FOR THE RIGHT OPENING! AND NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO PROTECT--YOU!

YOUR RESISTANCE IS MEANINGLESS, WINGED FOOL! NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND MY OWN CEREBRAL ENERGIES! YOU ARE ALL AS GOOD AS DEAD!

IN A PIG'S EYE WE ARE, MESMERO! WE'RE GONNA SHOVE THAT HYPNOTIC POWER RIGHT DOWN YOUR OWN THROAT!

CRUDE, BUT TO THE POINT, LITTLE BUDDY! ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF ICEMAN'S MOTION, ANSWER WITH --ACTION!

BUT, EVEN AS THEY REACH THEIR MUTANT TORMENTOR, THE VERY GROUND *RISES* TO SMITE THEM!

EEFFEEYA!

BAWOOM!!

WHAT IN THE--? THERE'S ONLY *ONE* EVIL BEING WITH SUCH POWER! BUT THAT'S--

--*IMPOSSIBLE!* WE OURSELVES SAW HIM *SINK* INTO THE SEA!

CORRECTO! ONLY--

--IF IT'S *NOT* HIM, WHO'S THAT SNAKE CRAWLIN' OUT OF THE *SHADOWS?*

I--I CAN'T SEE HIS FACE, BUT I CAN FEEL HIS AURA OF UNSPEAKABLE *EVIL...!*

YOU, ABOVE ALL SHOULD *KNOW* ME-- MY CHILD! FOR I AM--

--YOUR LOVING *FATHER!* I SAVED MY IDENTITY FROM YOU UNTIL *THIS* GLORIOUS DAY--

--WHEN I COULD TELL YOU PRIDEFULLY --AND ANNOUNCE TO THESE, WHO SHALL SOON BE MY *VICTIMS,* THAT...

MAGNETO LIVES!

NEXT LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER?

"THIS BOY--THIS BOMBSHELL!"

IF YOU GOT HERE *AFTER* THE SHOW STARTED, SHAME ON YOU--BUT LET US FILL YOU IN! *NORTON McCOY* WORKED IN A *NUCLEAR* PLANT...

...WHERE HE RISKED *DEATH* TO STOP A *RUN-AWAY* ATOMIC REACTOR!

THE *GENETIC* ACCIDENT THAT RESULTED PRODUCED A MOST *UNUSUAL* CHILD! (YOU CAN SAY *THAT* AGAIN!)

BALLY! WHERE *ARE* YOU, BALLY? DON'T *HIDE* FROM ME! I *FIND* YOU!

HENRY! COME *DOWN!* DID YOU *HEAR* YOUR MOTHER?

NORTON! ARE YOU JUST GOING TO *STAND* THERE? GET THAT BOY *DOWN!*

DOWN? I'M STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT *HOW* HE GOT *UP* THERE!

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(*THERE!* BRIEF CREDITS FOR A BRIEFER STORY--*OKAY?*)

THE YEARS PASSED *QUICKLY* FOR THE BOY WHO WOULD ONE DAY BE CALLED--*BEAST!*

MY LITTLE SLUGGER NEPHEW! PUT IT *THERE*, HANK-BOY!

CAREFULLY, SON!

EYOWWWW!

HENRY! NAUGHTY BOY! I *TOLD* YOU TO BE *CAREFUL!!*

I *WAS*, MOMMY! *HONEST*, I WAS!

THEN, WITH THE APPROACH OF *ADOLESCENCE*...

YOU CALL YOURSELVES *FOOTBALL PLAYERS?* YOU COULDN'T CATCH A *MARBLE* IN A *PEACH BASKET!*

LET'S SCRAM, HANK! THE COACH IS *BAWLING OUT* THE TEAM! THEY *LOST FIVE GAMES* IN A ROW!

WELL, AT LEAST THEY'RE *CONSISTENT*, DAMSEL!

SOME *VARSITY TEAM!* I COULD TAKE ANY PINT-SIZED *FRESHMAN* AND TURN HIM INTO A *STAR* ON THIS *CRUMMY SQUAD!*

YOU THERE! *FRESHMAN!*

M--M--ME?

YEAH! I WANT YOU TO *KICK* A FOOTBALL!

I--I--I'D RATHER *NOT*, SIR!

I SAID-- *KICK!*

Y--YES, SIR!

BAWHOOM!

D-D-DID YOU SEE *THAT?* *WOWEEEEEE!* THAT'S A FOOTBALL PLAYER!

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THROW ME ONE, BOY! WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT!

ASSUREDLY! BUT WOULD YOU MIND MOVING OUT A BIT FURTHER! IT'S HARD TO CONTROL SUCH SHORT PASSES!

SHORT?

BWOOOSH!

KWAMMM!

IF I LIVE THROUGH THIS--I'VE GOT THE STAR OF THE YEAR!

THERE HE IS, FOLKS--THE BOY WITH THE GOLDEN ARM--AND FOOT! HANK McCOY! HE'S LED THE TEAM TO SIX STRAIGHT VICTORIES!

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE STADIUM...

THERE'S $25,000 IN THAT BOX OFFICE, GUYS! LET'S GET IT!

YEAH--LAST YEAR YOU COULDN'T HAVE STUCK THIS JOINT UP FOR TWELVE CENTS! THREE CHEERS FOR HANK McCOY!

NO PARKING P.D.

HOW MANY TICKETS, SIR?

WE'LL TAKE--EVERYTHING!

IT'S--GAS!

HSSSSSS

COPS! WE'RE CUT OFF!

NOT YET! THROUGH THE STADIUM, QUICK!

POLICE

A FRENZIED CHASE WINDS UP WITHIN THE CROWDED SPORTS PALACE...

HALT! HALT OR I'LL FIRE!

NO, MORTY! YOU'LL HIT SOMEBODY IN THE CROWD!

STOP, THIEF! STOP!

FAT CHANCE THEY'VE GOT NOW! THEY CAN'T OPEN FIRE!

YEAH! WE'RE HOME FREE!

WELL--ALMOST!

I HOPE THAT LADY LUCK IS AMONG THE PULSATING PATRONS OF TODAY'S GAME!

BAWHOPP!

BAWHAMMP!

OWOOOUGH!

BUDDY! QUICK--TOSS ME YOUR HELMET! I NEED TWO--BOMBS!

YOU GOT IT-- DEADEYE!

YOWWWWF!

SWOOSH!

KAPOW!

ZZZZING!

HOLD IT, COPPERS! THIS IS A LIVE GRENADE! ONE MORE STEP AND YOU'LL GET IT!

STOP, MEN! HE'S DESPERATE ENOUGH TO DO IT!

NOW YOU GUYS STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND EVERY-BODY'S GONNA LIVE TO EAT CHICKEN SOUP WITH HIS WIFE TONIGHT!

SID

VWOOOSH!

URRRRGH!

BAWHUMMP!

FANTASTIC! HANK McCOY JUST CAPTURED THAT TRIO WITH 15,000 FANS AND FIVE MILLION TV VIEWERS WATCHING!

GREAT WORK, KID! ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU--IT'S YOURS!

YOU CAN START BY DISPOSING OF THAT GRENADE --SIR!

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AT THAT SAME MOMENT...

YOU SAW IT--YOU SAW THAT AMAZING LAD?

YES, GREAT ONE! I HAVE SEEN!

IT IS FATE! THE FINAL TOOL THAT I NEED FOR MY ONSLAUGHT! NEVER DID I HOPE TO FIND THIS YOUNG GEM--

WHO SHALL SOON MAKE ME MASTER--OF ALL!

HOW DOES THE KID WITH THE OVERGROWN EXTREMITIES FIGURE IN A PLAN FOR WORLD CONQUEST? IT'S ALL IN THE NEXT ISH! SO-- BE THERE!

END